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by Christine Stewart

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Transformational Leadership:

A High School Teacher's Personal Journey to Becoming A Transformational Leader

Christine Stewart

MGMT 850 Management Integrative Capstone

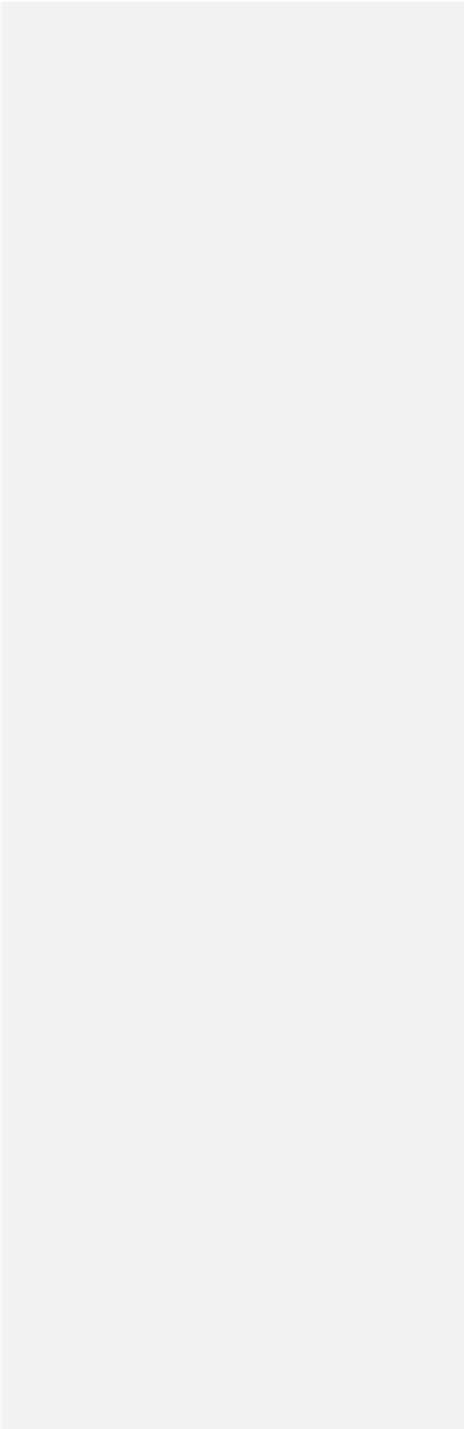
Granite State College

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP 2

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

3

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Abstract

Transformational Leadership is a recognized leadership style that has been effectively used in a public-school setting to increase teacher job satisfaction and student achievement. This project's intent is to use an autoethnographic methodology to establish a personal leadership plan for a teacher working for a public school in NH. The leadership plan will detail Transformational Leadership techniques that will be used by the teacher which will make a positive contribution to the overall success of the school. The project will provide the opportunity to utilize knowledge and insight gained during the Management Program in a practical application at a current educational setting.

Keyword: transformational leadership

Transformational Leadership:

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Introduction

Transformational Leadership has been effectively used as a tool to create employee satisfaction and student achievement in a school setting (Haj & Jubran, 2016). Teacher job satisfaction influences delivery of instruction, and in turn student achievement. Thus, school leadership should reflect a Transformational Leadership style. Given the documented success of using the theory in an educational setting, and that I am currently a public-school teacher; I will monitor my own leadership style to determine when transformational vs. transactional leadership traits are exhibited and create a plan to develop transformational leadership skills. Monitoring and creating a road map to acquire a leadership style and skills which are transformational will support not only personal leadership development but will contribute to the overall mission and goals of the school.

Literature Review

In their study, Haj & Jubran (2016) documented that Transformational Leadership has a positive influence on teacher job satisfaction and student achievement. Cansoy (2019) affirms this theory as it is backed by many years of research; which is the basis for Cansoy (2019) acknowledging Transformational Leadership as a preferred method in a school setting. Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley (2007) propose that Transformational Leadership promotes not only job satisfaction and student achievement; but also, motivation, innovative behavior, and commitment of teachers. In addition, Bromley et al.'s research surrounding Transformational Leadership supports idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized

consideration which are noted by Bromley et al as the four dimensions of Transformational Leadership. From the perspectives of Day, Gu, and Scammons (2016) it is important for the school to recognize that sustaining effectiveness over the long term will occur when the school strategically plans for improvement in work and culture.

Chaudry & Joshi (2018) propose that transformational leaders have attributes across four dimensions which include charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. A leader who has charisma is perceived as a role model who has high ethical standards, is strong willed and tenacious, dependable, and is a risk taker (Chaudry & Joshi, 2018). This charismatic quality lends itself to creating a situation whereby employees not only admire but can relate to the leader.

Chaudhry et al. conclude that inspirational motivation happens when the leader supports the employee in such a way that the employee finds value in their work, which in turn creates a shared vision and purpose and a momentum that propels employees to be optimistic and passionate about their job. Thus, according to Chaudhry & Joshi (2018) a transformational leader has the capability to foster intellectual stimulation by encouraging innovative thinking while providing an environment that supports creativity. This type of leader also pays careful attention to his/her employees giving each one individualized consideration and opportunities to grow professionally (Chaudhry & Joshi, 2018).

The four dimensions described are each valuable to a transformational leader and it is important to note that the underlying connection between the four is that they all relate to communication (Chaudhry & Joshi, 2018). Communication plays a key role in transformational

leadership as it is how a leader motivates, persuades, and forms relationships with employees (Chaudhry & Joshi, 2018).

Summary

As research has substantiated the positive effects of Transformational Leadership in an educational setting, the question of how to contribute to the overall mission of a school as an effective leader becomes relevant. How can evidence of the effectiveness of using Transformational Leadership to attain teacher satisfaction and student achievement be used for creating and monitoring a road map to becoming a Transformational Leader in an educational setting? Using an autoethnographic research study, information gained will be used to create a personal leadership plan that not only focuses on how to foster a Transformational Leadership style but allows self-reflection and criticism of occasions when transformational leadership was not used.

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Framework for Analysis

The framework of this paper relies on research documented through the literature review which identifies transformational leadership as an effective leadership style in an educational setting. Additionally, the four dimensions of a transformational leader are known to be charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration where the leader has the capability to motivate, persuade and form relationships with individuals. This description of a transformational leader bears relevancy to the paper as they are conditions which when achieved will support the overall goals and mission of the school.

Methods

The primary research methods for this paper are a literature review and autoethnographic research study. Wall (2008) describes autoethnographic research as a qualitative method whereby the sharing of personal experiences is used to document data in a research study. The study will be from a personal perspective as a high school teacher and will analyze leadership situations experienced to find fault or success in their outcomes.

As the author of the situational analysis used in this research project I will provide examples of leadership situations to highlight what a high school teacher experiences on a day to day basis to determine if the results of the actions were in alignment with that of a Transformational Leader. From this process of self-reflection, monitoring, and analyzing leadership skills; information gained will be used to determine a specific professional leadership plan that not only focuses on transformational leadership but identifies when the leadership style used was transactional.

Having identified three potential leadership situations encountered as a high school teacher, the focus of the research is on interactions by the teacher with the principal, colleagues, and students. The results of the autoethnographic research will provide a basis from which a personal leadership plan will be created which will augment school mandated professional development and will be used to promote transformational leadership development; while supporting the mission and goals of the school district.

Autoethnographic Study

I have identified three relevant situations whereby I interact with different individuals while performing my duties as a teacher. These situations are identified as potential opportunities to exercise transformational leadership qualities as a high school teacher. Please note that the table in Appendix 1 is a reference point for further discussion and determination of transactional vs. transformational tendencies that I have noted during the situations described in the autoethnography which follow. Additionally, the situations described and analyzed for this research study occurred during the month of May 2019.

I was asked by my principal to research and provide information which would be used to determine new classes that would be offered by the Business Program during the next school year. I was happy to be a part of this project because I could assess the current courses and determine what would be a logical and effective addition to the course offerings which would benefit students. Our current Business Program is comprised of four courses that are considered dual enrollment and eligible for college credit through the Community College System of NH (CCSNH). I was excited to be a part of planning future courses because I know that it will be beneficial to students who will earn college credit while in high school, as well as to the school district that has a goal of creating pathways to post-secondary education.

Using Table 1: Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership (Appendix A) I would conclude that my actions in this situation would fall into the classification as transformational leadership qualities because I was working to make a change within the system, I played a role in delivering innovation to the courses offered, and because I was motivated to contribute to the school for the common good as opposed to for the purpose of self-gain.

As a teacher of both Business and Yearbook courses I have occasion to ask permission from administration if students will be engaging in fundraising activities. This year a colleague and I initiated a partnership with Make A Wish NH whereby Business students would engage in fundraising activities to support an ill child's wish to travel. The process of following instructions set forth by the school district to gain approval for the fundraising was transactional in nature because it was part of a pre-designed system which needed to be followed in a step by step manner. However, the initiation of a new partnership with an organization outside of our school community shows characteristics of transformational leadership. In addition, the communication with a colleague to provide an innovative opportunity for our students to experience management, leadership, social responsibility, and civic duty are transformational and were achieved within a school system which is transactional in nature.

Classroom management has proven to be a situation where both transactional and transformational leadership is exercised. As there is a student handbook which outlines behavior and responsibilities of a student during the school day, my leadership style is often regulated by this pre-determined list of rules and regulations, and my actions in this situation are often transactional.

However, within the school day there are opportunities when interacting with students to exercise transformational leadership qualities. For example, a student came to class and asked if he could finish a poster that he was working on for a different course. According to the student handbook the student should be engaged in coursework relevant to the class he was in at the time. However, I chose to listen to the situation presented by the student and decided to support his efforts to work on the project because he was not behind in his coursework in my class, and

because I knew that it would benefit the student. Working with the students to understand the pressures they feel to be successful students is characteristic of transformational leadership.

As a leader within the classroom, I have observed that I take my position very seriously as I practice giving respect to all students while providing a welcoming environment where they feel comfortable learning and communicating with their peers. I consider myself a coach and mentor who they can rely on to provide support and guidance in addition as well as their teacher.

I have experienced a clash of sorts between when I am required to be transactional because of school rules and regulations and when I am able to exercise transformational leadership qualities. While I strive to give students the tools, information, and preferred learning methods that are individualized to their needs, I also must manage a group of 25 students as mandated by scheduling requirements of the school. Often the sheer number of students in a classroom inhibits my transformational leadership capabilities.

In effect the transactional nature of the scheduling requirements along with the need to fall back to non-innovative teaching because the number of students is so large impacts my efforts to be a transformational leader in the classroom.

Results

Personal Leadership Plan

The journey to becoming a transformational leader is ongoing and requires an investment of time and resources. I have identified three avenues for continued leadership development to advance my skills as a leader; leadership training, reading groups, and conferences make up my personal leadership plan.

LinkedIn Learning provides training opportunities through online courses in leadership and management. Topics for training include Collaboration, Coaching and Mentoring, and Leadership & Management. Participating in online training for topics that support transformational leadership will provide continuing leadership development opportunities which will improve my personal leadership skills (Over 600 Expert-Led Courses on Leadership and Management, 2019).

Harvard Business Publishing's Leading the Way is a leadership blog which is noted to be appropriate for different types of leadership challenges and for varied levels of leaders (Top 10 Leadership Blogs of 2018, 2018). By joining this reading group I will have access to ideas from members of Harvard Business School's faculty and Harvard Business Review's accomplished authors and will receive for their Management Tip of the Day which will propose one actionable way to be a better manager each day (Top 10 Leadership Blogs of 2018, 2018).

Attending a conference will provide the opportunity to engage and network with other leaders who seek to increase their leadership knowledge and skills. The National Management Association (NMA) is a leadership development organization that hosts an annual leadership conference. The organization provides an active leadership experience through lifelong learning

opportunities and networking with other leaders through membership in the organization and at their annual conference (National Management Association, 2019) .

Discussion and Analysis

The documented results of the autoethnographic research indicate that transactional and transformational leadership styles are used based upon the situation that is presented, and with whom the interaction is taking place. It is possible through self-analysis and reflection to identify when different leadership styles are used and to assess whether the style choice is effective in specific situations.

It is important to note that the scope of the study was limited to specific weeks during the month of May and is not inclusive of all situations that occur during the time that I was interacting with the principal, colleagues, and students. However, the situations described and evaluated are relevant because they provide insight to determine strengths and weaknesses in my transformational leadership capabilities and highlighted the necessity for creating a leadership development plan.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper supports that evidence of the effectiveness of transformational leadership to achieve teacher satisfaction and student achievement can be used to create and monitor a road map to becoming a Transformational Leader in an educational setting.

The literature review conducted reveals that although many studies support using a Transformational Leadership style in the field of education, there is a gap in research to provide information and direction for educational leaders on how one would develop transformational leadership skills for practical use and implementation. Additional research which would support

individuals seeking to be impactful transformational leaders is necessary to provide the basis from which educational leaders can use a leadership style that has been documented to be effective in an educational setting.

The autoethnographic research conducted supports the position that teachers have the power within the current educational system and within contractual obligations regarding professional development to not only conduct a self-analysis of leadership qualities but also engage in self-development of transformational leadership qualities. Teachers should take on the role of leaders within the education system and develop transformational leadership skills to contribute effectively to the success of the school for which he/she is employed.

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Appendix A

Table 1:

Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership, Adopted from Lussier and Achua (2012)

	<i>Transactional Leadership</i>	<i>Transformational Leadership</i>
How it works	<i>Works within a system.</i>	<i>Works to change a system.</i>
	<i>Starts solving by fitting experiences to a known pattern.</i>	<i>Starts solving by finding experiences that show the old pattern doesn't fit.</i>
	<i>Asks "where's the step-by-step?"</i>	<i>Asks "what do we need to change?"</i>
What it does	<i>Minimizes variation of the organization.</i>	<i>Maximizes capability of the team.</i>
	<i>Expects everyone meet a standard.</i>	<i>Inspires many people to give their best.</i>
	<i>Can be duplicated and sustained.</i>	<i>Requires minimal structure.</i>
	<i>Best at delivering defined results.</i>	<i>Best at delivering innovation.</i>